



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



SDDVA PARTICIPATES IN SRST VETERANS SUMMIT

SDDVA staff participated in Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Veterans Education Benefits Summit last week. TVSOs Manaja Hill and David Harrison coordinated this event at Sitting Bull College Veterans Club in Mobridge.

Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard was the keynote speaker at the luncheon. Education Manager Shane Olivier briefed participants on educational benefits and Program Manager Erin Bultje briefed on female veteran health benefits and SDJF.

Other presenters included: Jan Brockel, Sitting Bull College; Mike Faith, Chairman



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of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; SRST TVSO's Manaja Hill and David Harrison, and staff from the VA and Vet Centers.



DAY COUNTY RECOGNIZES 41 KOREAN WAR VETERANS

Last Friday afternoon Day County recognized 41 South Dakota Korean Veterans. Each of these heroes was presented with the Korean Ambassador Peace Medal.

Day County VSO Kevin Bohn and assistant Marcia Solberg spent many hours finding these heroes and their families, as well as coordinating this honoring ceremony.

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman was the keynote speaker and had the distinct honor to join family members and community leaders in presenting medals to these special heroes. Secretary Zimmerman presented the medal to the family of POW

Bruce Hook. Corporal Hook was taken prisoner of war while fighting the enemy in Korea on January 20, 1951 and died March 31, 1951, while a POW.

SDDVA Field Officer Kevin Bowen was also in attendance and assisted with the program.



SANFORD OPENS NEW VETERANS CLUB

Last Friday, Sanford Hospital unveiled an additional resource for veterans that visit their facility. The Veterans Club is a place where veterans can relax and share their military experiences.

The Veterans Club is located near the main lobby and will provide a lounge area with coffee and water, computer access, and television.

Sanford estimates that around 4,000 service members visit Sanford every month.

Veterans who work at Sanford also have "Veteran" on their ID badges to help ease anxiety and have those who served feel more comfortable.

Program Manager Heather Bullerman and Field Service Officer Michael Maske attended on behalf of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.



VA TAKES SIGNIFICANT STEP IN IMPROVING CORRESPONDENCE WITH VETERANS

As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) ongoing improvement of managing taxpayer dollars, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) has deployed the Centralized Benefits Communications Management Program (CBCM) nationally.

The program represents a new centralized printing and mailing process system designed to improve productivity and streamline correspondence with veterans on compensation benefits and pension burial claims.

"CBCM is one of many great examples of how VA continually explores ways to update outdated processes," said Acting VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "With this program, we took proven industry practices and adapted them to our needs."

Prior to CBCM, which went into effect March 23, VBA's 56 regional offices were responsible individually for their manual processing of outbound mail.

Under CBCM, claims processors across the country now submit letters electronically to one central location for printing and distribution — allowing specialized employees to focus more time and energy assessing veteran claims.

In addition to improving productivity, CBCM also will help reduce maintenance requirements of hundreds of regional office printers, reduce the likelihood of returned mail through additional address verification and enhance the security and privacy of veteran information through minimized handling of mail.

Over the past five years, VA has improved the way it processes compensation and pension claims enabling the development of CBCM. In the future, VA will enhance CBCM's design to improve further VBA's methods of communication with veterans by allowing them to choose between paper or digital correspondence.



STATEMENT BY ACTING VA SECRETARY

Monday marked four years since the disastrous wait-time scandal in Phoenix came to light, where long wait times at the Phoenix VA and at other department facilities nationwide led to unconscionable delays in receiving care.

Following that scandal, Congress passed the bipartisan VA Choice legislation that allowed veterans to seek care in the private sector when faced with VA wait times of over 30 days, or when veterans had to travel more than 40 miles to see a VA doctor.

Funding for the Choice program was set to expire last year, but Congress extended it twice while it worked on a bipartisan deal for the next generation of Choice legislation that would give even better options for veterans to seek care in the community when the VA was unable to provide them the best standard of treatment.

It's time to fix the Choice Program – as well as the department's other non-VA care efforts – once and for all by merging them into a single, streamlined community care program that's easy to use for veterans and VA employees.

America's Veterans are looking to Congress and the VA to come together now to provide them the best possible solutions for their care. you're the VA will be working overtime to achieve the promise of leaving no veteran waiting for care.



On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind.

For more information about VA's benefits and services for women veterans, as well as the Nationwide Baby Shower, visit www.va.gov/womenvet.



BHSU JACKET RIDE

The Black Hills State University 2018 Jacket Ride will be held Tuesday, August 7. Registration starts at 8:30. Kick stands up at 10:00. Lunch following ride at Scott Peterson Motors in Spearfish.

The Jacket Ride is a motorcycle ride through the Northern Black Hills of South Dakota that takes place during the Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. The ride is hosted by Black Hills State University and the proceeds benefit student veterans.

For more information, or to register, visit <https://www.bhsu.edu/About-BHSU/Events/Sturgis-Rally/Jacket-Ride/Jacket-Ride-Registration>



Tuesday, Aug. 7

COME RIDE WITH US TO RAISE MONEY FOR
SCHOLARSHIPS FOR VETERANS

\$50.00 per Rider • \$25.00 per Passenger
Includes Limited Edition T-Shirt and Lunch

Ride • Prizes • FUN

Registration | 8:30 AM
Kick Stands Up | 10:00 AM
Lunch | After the ride

BHSU Joy Center Parking Lot
1151 St. Joe, Spearfish, SD
Ride ends in Sturgis at Scott Peterson Motors
For more information contact: 605-642-6325
Kanda.Guthrie@BHSU.edu

Ride through two premier canyons in the Black Hills
Spearfish Canyon • Vanocker Canyon

THE ROUTE 2018

Dennis Kirk

Black Hills State University

SCOTT PETERSON MOTORS

Black Hills Pioneer

TESCHER RETIRES FROM STATE VETERANS HOME

The team at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home hosted a retirement bash for SDDVA's Gayle Tescher.

Gayle started working for the State of South Dakota on July 17, 2006 and journeyed to the Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota Veterans Home on February 16, 2010. She retired April 8, 2018.

As one chapter ends, another begins. Welcome to your new found freedom, Gayle! You are now at the chapter where you are your own "boss".



UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr 12—VA Veterans Town Hall—Lake Area Tech (1201 Arrow Avenue SD) Watertown—5:00 pm (CT)
Apr 27-29—DAV State Convention—The Lodge—Deadwood
May 7—SFVAHCS Baby Shower
May 10—VABHHCS Baby Shower
May 11—AHEC Improving Veterans Care Conference—University Center—Sioux Falls
May 11—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs —10:00 am (MT)
May 19—MOPH State Convention—DAV Headquarters in Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
May 22—SDDVA Mini Conference via Skype—10:00 am (CT)
May 24-25—PVA Disabled Veterans Fishing Tournament—Chamberlain
Jun 7-10—American Legion State Convention—Spearfish
Jun 14-17—VFW State Convention—Sioux Falls
Jul 7—Veterans for Veterans Annual Poker Run—Mitchell Depot—1:00 pm (CT)
Jul 11—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
Jul 12—Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Cemetery Grand Opening—Sisseton—11:00 am (CT)
Jul 13 —VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Education Classroom—Fort Meade—10:00 am (MT)
Jul 14-17—DAV National Convention—Reno, NV
Jul 21-25—VFW National Convention—Kansas City, MO
Jul 26—VABHHCS Veterans Town Hall—Post 8 American Legion—Pierre
Aug 20-24—SDDVA Benefits School—Ramkota—Pierre
Aug 24-30—American Legion National Convention—Minneapolis, MN
Sept 14—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
Oct 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—Soldiers and Sailors Building—Pierre—8:00 am (CT)
Nov 16—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs —10:00 am (MT)



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